



Why Family Child Care?

What is family child care?

Family child care is group child care offered by individuals in their own homes. Most people who provide this type of care are required to be licensed in California by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing either as a:

- * **“small” family child care home** for up to six children (plus optional two school-age children under certain conditions) or
- * **“large” family child care home** for up to twelve children (plus optional two school-age children under certain conditions) with an assistant.

Note: The provider’s own children under ten year of age are included when counting total number of children.

Why do parents choose family child care providers?

Parents choose family child care for several reasons, including:

- * They prefer their children to spend their days in a home-like environment with a smaller group setting (compared to a child care center).
- * They prefer to relate to a single caregiver, and possibly an assistant who may be a family member. Children in family child care homes may have a single, consistent caregiver from infancy through school-age.
- * They may want all of their children to be cared for together, for convenience and so that siblings can interact during the day. Family child care homes can care for children from birth through twelve years of age together in the same group.
- * Sometimes they select family child care because they find it closer to home, less expensive or more flexible than child care centers. Some family child care providers offer care beyond the typical weekday 7:00 am to 6:00 pm schedule, to serve families with evening, night or weekend work hours.

Many families find that their family child care provider and her family become like extended family over the years.

What licensing regulations must family child care providers meet?

California has minimum health and safety standards for family child care providers and their homes (which are inspected prior to licensure). Family child care providers and any person eighteen years or older living in the residence are required to be fingerprinted, have a criminal records check and child abuse and neglect clearance. Also prior to licensure, family child care providers must take at least fifteen hours of health and safety training including infant/child CPR and first aid and their homes must receive a fire inspection clearance. Many providers have taken college coursework or other training in child development and early education, although this is not required. Some providers have the necessary experience and education to work in child care centers/preschools but have chosen to provide family child care so they can be at home with their own children and/or have their own small business. More information about licensing requirements can be found on the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, Child Care Licensing Website: <http://cclld.ca.gov/PG411.htm>. Also, Self-Assessment Guides provide parents and child care providers with summaries of Regulations for both Family Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers: <http://cclld.ca.gov/PG496.htm>. For the full list of Title 22 Regulations, visit: <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/PG240.htm>.

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Which family child care providers are not required to be licensed?

Caregivers are exempt from licensing if:

- * They are related to the children by blood or marriage
- * They care for children from only one other family besides their own
- * They provide care for a child in the child's own home
- * They participate in a cooperative arrangement with other parents where no money changes hands (provided certain other conditions are met), and/or if
- * Their program operates only one day per week for no longer than four hours on that one day.

How do I find the names of licensed family child care providers?

The Community Child Care Council of Santa Clara County (the 4Cs) is the designated child care resource and referral (R&R) Agency for Santa Clara County. They provide free referrals to parents for licensed family child care homes and child care centers. You may request referrals for any city or neighborhood. Contact (408) 487-0749 or visit their website at <http://www.4c.org/>. For the City of Milpitas child care resource and referral assistance, visit the City of Milpitas Child Care Program website at www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/resident/child_care/child_care.asp. Click on the left sidebar to download lists of family child care providers and child care centers, get handy tips for finding child care and much more.

What can I do to ensure that my child and our family will have a positive and safe experience using family child care?

- * Learn how to select quality child care – what to look for and questions to ask.
- * After asking basic questions by phone, visit several homes to observe the interactions and physical environment.
- * Check the provider's licensing history by calling the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing San Jose Regional Child Care Office at (408) 324-2148. Ask for a "file review".
- * Ask the provider for parent references. Call the referrals and ask a variety of questions.
- * Ask questions and discuss your concerns and child rearing philosophies with the provider during your search and after starting in care. If you have serious concerns about the home to which the provider is not responsive, call the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing San Jose Regional Child Care Office at (408) 324-2148 and make a report.
- * Begin early and maintain a mutually respectful, business relationship with the provider, including having a contract describing services, vacation, sick child, late pick-up, payment and other policies.
- * Continue to monitor your care arrangement by taking time to observe and ask questions when you drop off or pick up your child, or request to speak with the provider at a more convenient time. Feel free to stop by unannounced during the day to visit.

How can I get more information? What if I want to open my own family child care home?

For more information, visit the City of Milpitas Child Care Program website at www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/resident/child_care/child_care.asp. If you are considering opening your own family child care home, read the *City of Milpitas Start Up Guide* to learn more about the licensing process: http://www.ci.milpitas.ca.gov/resident/child_care/provider.asp. You may also contact the City of Milpitas Planning and Neighborhood Services Department's general line at (408) 586-3279.